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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE REVIEW

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PROSPECTS FOR SOLUTION OF FRENCH CABINET CRISIS

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Failure by former premier Antoine Pinay to attempt investiture probably means a French government impasse of several weeks. A prolonged crisis would delay if not endanger approval of the Paris accords in the Council of the Republic, and would probably lead to renewed violence in North Africa. The constitution now permits investiture of a premier-designate by a simple majority, but this advantage is somewhat offset by the requirement for simultaneous approval of his cabinet.

Pinay was unable to overcome the Popular Republicans' concern about reassuring their electorate that they are still a party of the left. The Popular Republicans are now likely to be called, but their candidate will be handicapped by the antagonism of Pinay's conservative backers. Pierre Pflimlin would probably be their first choice. In any event his investiture would depend on Socialist support, and there is a possibility that the Popular Republicans may forego a try for the premiership in favor of an attempt at a left-center coalition including the Socialists.

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Although the Socialists warned the Popular Republicans during the North African debate not to seek their support in forming a new government, there are indications that Socialist leader Christian Pineau, highly respected and moderate in outlook, is considering the advisability of heading a left-center coalition. Such a grouping, would include Radical Socialists and would be dependent on some Gaullist support. A left-center grouping would satisfy Popular Republican and Socialist economic and social aims, and encourage European integration minded members of both these parties and of the Radicals.

If these attempts fail, the Radicals would be next in line. Rene Mayer, considered the spokesman of Mendes-France's opposition, reportedly stepped aside in favor of Pinay on the first round. Acting foreign minister Faure, whom Mendes-France reportedly proposed as his successor, is probably in a better position to heal internal Radical Socialist dissension. Faure would be acceptable to most of the conservative parties and offers the assurance of continuity in domestic policy.

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Robert Schuman is a likely possibility for the Foreign Ministry in all these eventualities, and action on the Paris accords would probably be pushed in the Council of the Republic. There is little likelihood, moreover, that a new premier would refuse to take up the Tunisian negotiations where Mendes-France left off. No immediate change is envisaged in France's policy toward Vietnam. Any new premier would probably be inclined to work more closely with the Diem government although he is not likely to withdraw the Sainteny mission in Hanoi, at least in the immediate future.

~~In the event the Popular Republicans block Pinay, they would be expected to make a try at the premiership, and Pierre Pflimlin is their most likely candidate. He would appeal to most of Pinay's backers, but his investiture would probably depend on a~~

In view of Pinay's failure the Council of the Republic will probably avail itself of the constitutional provision under which a cabinet crisis lasting more than eight days permits a council deadline to be postponed by a corresponding period. A long crisis would mean postponement of the 11 March deadline for council action. Such a delay

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for amending them. The Gaullists' parliamentary spokesman has just reiterated their strong insistence on prior big-power talks. The Popular Republicans may press for some progress in ~~BRUNN~~ negotiations for an arms production pool, but they will probably be leery of any amendment of the accords, which would automatically require their resubmission to the assembly. While assembly reapproval of the accords had been regarded as uncertain, some reassurance can be found in a recent statement by the Popular Republican secretary general to American officials that his party would now support them.

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